

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:754
ANSWERED ON:28.04.2016
Information Technology Facilities
Singh Shri Bhola

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has taken steps to improve poor Information & Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure and financial condition of grass root level institutions in rural areas;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, State/UTwise;
- (c) the details of funds allocated and released for the development of the ICTs in rural areas, State/UT-wise; and
- (d) the details of steps taken/being taken to promote women entrepreneurship in rural areas, State/UT-wise?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(SHRI SUDARSHAN BHAGAT)

(a): Yes, Madam.

(b): Government of India under the Digital India Programme is implementing various schemes namely the Common Service Centres (CSCs), BharatNet (earlier National Optical Fibre Network) and Comprehensive Telecom Development Program to develop and provide support to the use of information technology in rural areas of the country. The CSCs are Information and Communication Technology (ICT) enabled kiosks with broadband connectivity to provide various Governments, private and social services to citizens at their doorsteps. As on 31.03.2016 a total of 122,621 CSCs are operating across the country at Gram Panchayat level. The State-wise details of operating CSCs is given at Annexure-A.

Government under Bharat Net project aims at connecting all Gram Panchayats (approx. 2.5 lakh) in the country through Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) with atleast 100 Mbps bandwidth to enable the delivery of various e-services at the panchayat level. As on 18.04.2016, Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) has been laid in 1,09,203 Kms and 47,882 Gram Panchayats (GPs) have been connected with OFC. State wise status of implementation of projects is given at Annexure- B

(c): No state wise allocation of funds is done under the BharatNet project. The BharatNet project is being executed by a Special Purpose Vehicle namely Bharat Broadband Network Limited. As against the sanctioned amount of Rs. 20,100 crore under Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) for BharatNet, funds to the tune of Rs. 4685.97 have been utilized till 31.03.2016.

As per the guidelines of Ministry of Finance, upto 10% of the grants sanctioned by the Ministry of Finance to the States for rural local bodies can be utilized for technical and administrative support to GPs towards O&M cost and capital expenditure. Gram Panchayats can utilize this amount for providing computers, internet connectivity and part time data entry operators for pursuing the e-Governance initiatives. The basic grants released to State Government (s) for Rural Local Bodies during 2015-16 as recommended by Fourteenth Finance Commission as on 31-03-2016 is given at Annexure-C.

(d): Government is encouraging women entrepreneurs to set up common services centres and the contribution made by women village level entrepreneurs (VLE) is recognized by Government through awards/ incentives. Awards/ incentives are being conferred to successful women village level entrepreneurs (VLE). Till 31st March, 2016, total 23,245 women entrepreneurs have setup CSCs and delivering services in rural areas.
